

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 COPENH 02093 040855Z

11

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

NEA-10 RSR-01 OMB-01 /119 W
----- 128712

R 021015Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7594

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS COPENHAGEN 2093

GENEVA FOR CSCE

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SCL, SOCI, DA, VT, FR

SUBJ: DANISH FILM STIRS CONTROVERSY WITH CATHOLIC CHURCH

SUMMARY: PROJECTED DANISH FILM PURPORTED TO DEAL WITH LOVE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST HAS STIRRED DOMESTIC CONTROVERSY OVER GOVT SUBSIDIES FOR SUCH FILMS. CONDEMNATION OF FILM BY POPE PAUL, BOMB ATTEMPT ON DANISH AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE IN ROME AND OFFICIAL DENIAL OF LOCATION RIGHTS IN FRANCE HAS ELEVATED CONTROVERSY TO INTERNATIONAL LEVEL AND PROVOKED MINISTER OF CULTURE TO ATTACK CATHOLIC CHURCH. DANISH GOVT IS EMBARRASSED AND RECONSIDERING SEM-OFFICIAL SUBSIDY GIVEN FILM. END SUMMARY.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 COPENH 02093 040855Z

1. DANISH GOVT'S SUBSIDIES FOR THE ARTS HAVE BEEN A SOURCE OF CHRONIC DOMESTIC CONTROVERSY AS DISAPPOINTED APPLICANTS FOR GOVT AID HAVE TRADITIONALLY AKEN THEIR COMPLAINTS TO THE PRESS. NEW LAW PASSED DURING LAST FOLKETING SESSION SOUGHT TO REDUCE PROBLEM BY (A) ESTABLISHING AUTONOMOUS FILM INSTITUTE TO DISPENSE SUBSIDY FUNDS, AND (B) PLACING SELECTION OF FILMS FOR SUBSIDY IN HANDS OF INDEPENDENT FILM BOAFD, ADVISED BY TWO EXPERTS OF WIDELY DIFFERING VIEWS. FIRST PROJECT GRANTED A SUBSIDY UNDER NEW LAW HAS, HOWEVER, STIRRED EVEN GREATER CONTROVERSY,PROVOKED WRITTEN PROTEST CAMPAIGN BY ANISH CHURCH AUTHORITIES AND EMBROILED THE GOVT IN A NASTY VERBAL CONFLICT WITH THE VATICAN.

2. FILM AT ISSUE, ENTITLED "THE LOVE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST", REMAINS A GREAT MYSTERY. ONLY ONE FILM BOARD EXPERT APPEARS TO HAVE READ LENGTH FILMSSCRIPT, BUT POPULAR IMPRESSION OF FILM AS PORNOGRAPHIC POP ART HAS BEEN CREATED BY MEDIA AND BY FILM'S UNCONVENTIONAL (BUT REPUTEDLY CBLE) DIRECTOR, JENS JORGEN THORSEN. PICTURES OF THORSEN CRUCIFIED,BLOODY AND NAKED SURROUNDED BY EQUALLY NAKED FEMAL MOURNERS HAVE BEEN WIDELY CARRIED IN DANISH AND INTERNATIONAL PRESS.

3. PORNOGRAPHIC IMAGE STIRRED IMMEDIATE RACTION IN DENMARK WHERE CONSERVATIVE PARLIAMENTARIANS ASKED MINISTER OF CULTURE NIELS MATTHIASSEN TO EXPLAIN GOVT'S SUBSIDY TO FILM, WHICH MIGHT PROVE INDICTABLE UNDER CRIMINAL CODE'S PARAGRAPH ON BLASPHEMY. PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FOR SIGNATURES TO PROTEST PETITION WAS INITIATED BY THREE PASTORS OF DANISH (LUTHERN) CHURCH. PUBLIC REACTION IN DENMARK WAS ALSO WIDELY NEGATIVE, QUESTIONING RATIONALE FOR GRANTINGPRODUCTION GUARANTEE (UP TO 600,000 KRONER) FOR QUESTIONABLE EROTICISM WHEN GOVT UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE TO REDUCE EXPENDITURES.

4. ON AUGUST 26 POPE PAUL CONDEMNED FILM AS "AN UGLY AND BLAS PHEMOUS ATTEMPT TO DISTORT OUR SAVIOR'S IRREPROACHABLE FIGURE". ONE DAY LATER THREE BOMBS WERE THROWN AT RESIDENCE OF DANISH AMBASSADOR IN ROME, HANS TABOR, CAUSING LITTLE DAMAGE. SAME DAY FRENCH FILM INSTITUTE ANNOUNCED THAT MAKING OF THORSEN'S FILM WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED IN FRANCE.

5. INTERNATIONAL REACTION OPPOSING THORSEN'S "JESUS" FILM MULTIPLIED PRESSURE ON DANSH FILM INSTITUTE AND MINCULTURE MATTHIASSEN UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 COPENH 02093 040855Z

M

LATTER LAUNCHED INTEMPERATE ATTACK ON CATHOLIC CHURCH IN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED AUGUST 30 IN KRISTELIGT DAGBLAD, A CHURCH-ORIENTED DAILY. "THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS THROUGH CENTURIES BEEN FOOLISH AND OPPRESSIVE. IT IS REACTIONARY. PROTESTS FROM THAT DIRECTION I DONT TAKE SERIOUSLY", HE STATED. CHURCH MINISTER DORTE BENNEDSEN IMMEDIATELY DISAGREED, STATING THAT CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MANY AREAS WAS IN FACT "REVOLUTIONARY FORCE". PRIME MINISTER HAS REMAINED WELL OUT OF

CONTROVERSY, REFERRING ALL QUESTIONS TO MATTHIASSEN . MFA IS
REPORTEDLY SENDING NOTE TO ALL EMBASSIES IN COPENHAGEN CLARIFYING
AUTONOMOUS NATURE OF FILM INSTITUTE AND COUNTERING ACCUSATIONS THAT
FILM IS SUBSIDIZED BY DANISH GOVT ITSELF. (NOTE NOT YET RECEIVED
BY EMBASSY.)

6. MEANWHILE, FILM INSTITUTE DIRECTOR HAS ANNOUNCED THAT SUBSIDY
QUESTION WILL BE RECONSIDERED AND HAS GIVEN THORSEN THIRTY DAYS
TO PRESENT NEW PRODUCTION LOCATION AND BUDGET PLANS. IRONY OF WHOLE
AFFAIR AS POINTED OUT BY SOME PRESS COMMENTARY, IS THAT PUBLICITY
FILM HAS NOW RECEIVED MAY MAKE SUBSIDY UNNECESSARY BY ASSURING IT
OF PRIVATE FINANCING
CROWE

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PORNOGRAPHY, CENSORSHIP, MOTION PICTURES, SUBSIDIES, ARSON
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973COPENH02093
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: COPENHAGEN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730958/aaaabqhy.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kellerpr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Aug-2001 by reddocgw>; APPROVED <08-Jan-2002 by kellerpr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DANISH FILM STIRS CONTROVERSY WITH CATHOLIC CHURCH SUMMARY: PROJECTED DANISH FILM PURPORTED TO DEAL WITH LOVE LIFE OF
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SCUL, SOCI, DA, VT, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005